

## Methods of Teaching Entrepreneurship and Prior Skills as Predictors of Employment Aspiration among graduates

Odigbo, P. C. (PhD)<sup>1</sup>, Olatu, J. O<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>(Department of Business Administration and Management, Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State)

<sup>2</sup>(Department of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State)

---

### Abstract

*Background:* Entrepreneurship education was introduced into tertiary education in Nigeria ten years ago with the aim of increasing self-employment among graduates. Methods of teaching entrepreneurship and skills possessed before entrepreneurship programmes were speculated to influence graduates employment aspiration. This paper investigated methods of teaching entrepreneurship education and prior skills as determinants of employment aspiration of graduates of a polytechnic.

*Materials and Methods:* The hypotheses inquired whether methods of teaching entrepreneurship education and prior skills were determinants of employment aspiration among graduates. Survey questionnaire was administered on 324 graduates, and data collected were analysed with simple linear regression at 0.05 level of significance.

*Results:* The findings were that methods of teaching entrepreneurship were predictors of employment aspiration but prior skill was not.

*Conclusion:* Adoption of experiential learning methods such as internship, apprenticeship and partnership were recommended.

**Key words:** Entrepreneurship, employment aspiration, self-employment, methods of teaching, prior skills.

---

Date of Submission: 29-01-2021

Date of acceptance: 14-02-2021

---

### I. Introduction

Entrepreneurship education was compulsorily introduced into all programmes in tertiary education in Nigeria to encourage undergraduates to explore the self-employment option to mitigate the menace of graduate unemployment and associated challenges. At that time, graduate unemployment was estimated to be above 20% and rising (NBS 2008). The rising rate of graduate unemployment was attributed partly to defects in skills development in the formal education sector (Bassey and Atan 2012), and mostly to saturation of employment opportunities in the formal sector ( ). A national survey sponsored by The National Universities Commission and the Education Trust Fund to assess graduate employability revealed that 60 percent of employers interviewed rated Nigerian graduates poor on skills needed for employment like literacy, oral communication, information technology, entrepreneurship, analytical problem-solving and decision making (Salami, 2011).

Entrepreneurship education was then introduced into schools; to improve employability at the micro level and increase the number of start-ups at the macro level, and so create opportunities for employment (OECD, 2006). The experience of some countries where entrepreneurship education was used to foster self-employment, and resulted to positive outcomes for individuals, firms and society (UNESCO 2012), served as eloquent testimonies. This of course did not mean that success was recorded in all situations.

In a study of graduates who participated and those who did not participate in entrepreneurship education, Odigbo and Olatu (2014) compared their employment aspiration. The difference in employment aspiration between the experimental and control group was not significant with  $r^2 = 0.021$  at 0.05 level of significance. Ussman and Postigo (2000) also suggested that methods of delivery used in entrepreneurship made a significant difference on both employment aspiration and outcome. Similar results may have informed, Henry, Hill and Leitch (2004) suggestions for constant and rigorous evaluation of the methods of entrepreneurship delivery on youth employment aspiration.

In their study of the impact of schooling on entrepreneurship selection, measured at the individual level, Van der Silius, Van Prag and Vijverberg (2003) and found the impact as mostly insignificant. Clouse and Goodin (2002) attributed the insignificant impact on the emphasis placed by universities (and polytechnics) on the analytical thought process which tends to cripples the imagination of students in the attempt, because curricula were designed around systems of control and compliance, which tends to stifle entrepreneurial instinct of students. Akola and Heinomen (2009), while agreeing that the 'science of entrepreneurship' is teachable in the classroom, observed that the 'art of entrepreneurship'; the very nub of creation and innovation were not

teachable in the same way because it is essentially experiential in nature. Their view was that “the ‘art’ of entrepreneurship was learned in the business environment through inductive, practical and social experiences”.

Rae (2004) had stated that in order to understand the ‘art’ of entrepreneurship, there was need to understand how people learn, not in a general learning theory context, but in entrepreneurial behaviour learning context which incorporates how entrepreneurial capabilities were developed as budding entrepreneurs need not only functional business knowledge (science) but also ‘a new way of thinking (art)’. Apart from knowledge and skills, the entrepreneur needs to achieve self-efficacy too. Bandura (1986) contextualized entrepreneurial self-efficacy as the measure of a person ‘belief in his ability to successfully start an enterprise’. According to Harper (2003) self efficacy influences how people think, feel, motivate themselves and act.

Heinmen (2006) had arguing that the classroom may not be appropriate for effective transfer of entrepreneurship skills. He emphasised that unlike other courses, learning outputs are not the ultimate goals of entrepreneurship training, rather tangible measurable outcomes. Measurable outcomes are manifested in form of new business start-ups or expansion of existing businesses. According to Fayolle and Klandt (2006) outcomes of entrepreneurship education manifests as changes in culture or state of mind or attitude or changes in behaviour, skill or creation of specific situations or new firms.

One popular method of measuring entrepreneurship program outcome on participants was by predicting employment aspiration (Wu and Wu 2008). Bartley (2007) suggested that efforts to improve the employment prospects of young people should also address their expectations about what they are capable of becoming and the barriers that stand in their way.

Employment aspiration was defined by Quaglia and (Cobb (1996) as the “ability to set goals for future employment, while being inspired during the present to work towards those goals”. In a study, Bysshe and Hughes (2010) found that employment aspirations had a major bearing on the types of employment that was secured ultimately. Questions arose about the effect of entrepreneurship educations on employment aspiration among graduates because teachers used different methods which are expected to produce different educational outcomes hence, Laukkannem (2000) differentiated between education ‘about’ entrepreneurship and education ‘for’ entrepreneurship. In a study of U. S. students, Gibson and Harris (2008) used the Entrepreneurial Orientation Attitude (EOA) model to measure the influence of teaching methods on entrepreneurial aspiration. One of their findings was that students’ completion of only one course in a Small Business Institute program modified their employment aspiration.

Another aspect of this study has to do with prior skills as a predictor of employment aspiration. Being that this study focuses on polytechnics, which by nature are skills oriented, it was considered necessary to measure prior skills as a predictor. In a survey of attendees of entrepreneurship program, Peterman and Kennedy (2003) reported that “changes in perception were related to prior working experience and entrepreneurship programs”. In the same light, skills and experiences acquired by students before being admitted into the tertiary institutions are likely to influence employment aspiration.

This paper examined and widened the discourse on whether methods of teaching entrepreneurship education and other factors such as prior skills were predictors of employment aspiration of graduates by seeking answers to questions as: Does methods of teaching entrepreneurship predict employment aspiration? Does prior skills influence employment aspiration? In order to assess employment aspiration of sampled polytechnic graduates in terms of those variables, two hypotheses were raised and tested:

- (i) There is no statistically significant difference in employment aspiration among graduates based on methods of teaching entrepreneurship education.
- (ii) There is no statistically significant difference in employment aspiration among graduates based on prior skills.

## **II. Materials and Methods**

There was a dearth of empirical studies on methods of teaching entrepreneurship education. We, therefore conducted a preliminary investigation to identify the range of pedagogies used for teaching entrepreneurship in polytechnic, to guide the research design. Out of a population of 622 Higher National Diploma graduates from four schools (faculties) of the 2011/2012 set (FPA 2013), who participated in entrepreneurship program, 256 was drawn by snowball sampling technique. The non-probability method was used as it was not practicable to access the data otherwise (Jankowicz, 2005). The instrument was a semi-structured questionnaire with four items, which sought to collect data on the independent and dependent variables.

The independent variables were methods of teaching entrepreneurship and prior skills. This study assumed lecture as constant and therefore sought for variations between respondents exposed to additional methods such as use of test, use of test and factory visit, and use of test and preparation of business plan. Possession of prior skill before participation in entrepreneurship program was measured with a dichotomous item of yes or no.

The questionnaire item on the dependent variable generated data on graduates' employment aspiration as respondents picked either public service, self-employment, employment in the private sector and others. The 'others' category was added to accommodate those whose employment aspiration may not have been represented.

Out of 256 questionnaires issued, 251 were found usable as 5 were mutilated and so rejected. Descriptive analysis was carried out on the data to appreciate the distributions. The simple regression model of  $\gamma_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 + \epsilon_i$ , was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Regression is commonly used in entrepreneurship research because, according to Brush, Manolova and Edelman (2008), it can predict intentions by determining association between independent variables and the dependent variables both in terms of direction and strength.

### III. Results

Descriptive analyses of data gathered for this study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Methods of teaching entrepreneurship, prior skills and employment aspiration**

C a t e g o r i e s		Frequency	Percentage	C u m Frequency
P e d a g o g y	L e c t u r e + T e s t s	4 7	1 8 . 8	1 8 . 8
	Lec. +Test + Factory visit	68	27.2	46.0
	Lec. + Test + Bus. Plan	136	54.0	100.0
P r i o r s k i l l s	N	1 1 1	4 4 . 4	4 4 . 4
	Yes	140	55.6	100.0
E m p l o y m e n t a s p i r a t i o n	P u b l i c s e r v i c e	1 0 7	4 2 . 6	4 2 . 6
	Self-employment	34	13.6	98.8
	Private sector employ	03	1.2	100.2
	Others			

Source: FPA (2019) Survey

Table 1 shows that 19% of respondents had lectures and test; 27% had lectures, test and factory visits; while 54% had lectures and test in addition to writing a business plan. Table 1 also shows that 44% of respondents had no prior skills while 56% had prior skills before participation in entrepreneurship programmes. Table 1 reveals that 43% of respondents aspired for self-employment and another 43% aspired for public service, while 14% aspired for private sector employment and 2% aspired for "others" category of employment.

The simple linear regression analysis was used to examine how each of two predictor variables: methods of teaching entrepreneurship and prior skills were related to employment aspiration. Simple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses, because the main objective was to relate each of the predictor variable to the dependent variable (employment aspiration) and the results are summarily presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Dependent variable: employment aspiration**

Independent variable	( B )	T	R <sup>2</sup>	S i g .	R e m a r k s
P e d a g o g y	. 2 0 2	3 . 0 4 3	. 0 5 5	. 0 0 3	S i g n
P r i o r S k i l l	. 0 9 7	. 8 3 3	. 0 0 4	. 8 3 3	N o t s i g .

Source: FPA (2019) Survey

Table 2 presents the summary of a simple regression analysis to predict employment aspiration of polytechnic graduates from two independent variables namely methods of teaching entrepreneurship and prior skills. The table reveals that methods of teaching entrepreneurship ( $R = .202 < p0.05$ ) was a significant predictors of employment aspiration, while prior skills ( $R = -.043 < p0.05$ ) was not a significant predictors of employment aspiration in the sample.

### IV. Discussion

The result provided valuable insight on the relationship between methods of teaching entrepreneurship and employment aspiration. For example, that methods of teaching entrepreneurship was a significant predictor of employment aspiration, reinforces the doubts expressed by Odigbo and Owaseye (2005), on entrepreneurship delivery methods, while confirming the findings of Gibb (2002), that mere participation in entrepreneurship may not always translate to readiness for self-employment. The result that prior skill was a not significant predictor of employment aspiration is rather intriguing. It suggests that polytechnic graduates who had acquired other skills before admission into polytechnics, may not be more inclined to explore self-employment option.

The generalizeability of the findings of this study may be limited because of the limited scope of the study, the small population and the sample was not random. However, the findings provide insight on the factors that may influence employment aspiration among graduates, the direction or magnitude of such influence, thus setting a platform for further research.

## V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study suggested that except appropriate methods were adopted entrepreneurship education may not develop confidence in graduates to aspire for self-employment. The implication was that, not minding espoused altruistic intentions, abstract theoretical exposition in the classroom may not sufficiently instill the entrepreneurial culture and so re-enforces Udoji (1977), that learning to manage in a non-work environment is like learning to swim without being inside water.

The two findings of this study if taken together are very insightful and so have policy implications. In the first place, it calls for a review of entrepreneurship delivery methods in polytechnics, and other tertiary institutions as well.

In order to enhance employment aspiration among graduates, this study recommends:

1. the adoption of modified versions of proven traditional training methods such as apprenticeship, internship, partnership and other forms of experiential learning including mentorship. These activities provide an environment for youths to interact with adults in actual work setting, incorporating on-the-job training and experiencing, while focusing on the employment needs of young people, as well as long term career and life goals. The learner is enabled to learn through observation, imitation, and participation. The learner may spend holiday periods, breaks and other free times learning the trade and eventually leaves the shop competent and confident enough to run a shop without supervision. He is, therefore, ready to start a new outfit or go into partnership with his master or any interested investor or join a franchise chain.
2. Extension of entrepreneurship education activities to secondary education, which will provide the data needed by policy makers over time and compared with data from tertiary education, to decide more effective level for entrepreneurship education.
3. There is the need for further research on the entrepreneurship education delivery methods in polytechnics and tertiary education in general so as to ensure that efforts invested is not in vain.

## References

- [1]. Bartley, M. (2007): Capability and Resilience: Beating the Odds. Swindon: Economic and Social Research Council
- [2]. Bysshe, S. and Hughes, D (2010): Understanding Educational Choices – Research with 16- 22 year Olds: Internal Learning and Skills Council.
- [3]. Clouse, R. W. and Goodin, T. L (2002): Entrepreneurship in Action: A web case model. *Journal of educational technology systems*, 30(3), 311-321.
- [4]. Heinonen, J., Poikkijoki, S-A., (2006): "An entrepreneurial-directed approach to entrepreneurship education: Mission impossible?" *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 25, (No. 1), pp. 80–94.
- [5]. Henley, A. (2007): "Entrepreneurial aspiration and transition into self-employment: evidence from British longitudinal data." *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 19, May, pp 253–280.
- [6]. Henry, C., Hill, F., and Leitch, C. (2005): Entrepreneurship education and training: can entrepreneurship be taught? *Education and Training*, 47(2), pp. 98-111.
- [7]. Laukkannem, M. (2000): Exploring alternative approaches to high-level entrepreneurship education: creation of micro mechanism for endogenous regional growth. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 12: 25-47.
- [8]. National Bureau of Statistics (2010): unemployment and underemployment Report.
- [9]. Odigbo, P. C. and Olatu, J. O. (2014): Entrepreneurship and course studied as determinants of employment aspiration among polytechnic graduates, *SEEM Research and Development Journal*, 2(1).
- [10]. Odigbo, P. C. And Owaseye, E. O (2005): "Strategies for teaching entrepreneurship for self-employment in polytechnics in Nigeria, *Teachers Professional Journal*, 1(1).
- [11]. OECD (2006): *Entrepreneurship and local economic development: Programme and policy recommendations*, Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED), OECD Publishing. doi:10.1787/9789264199798-en
- [12]. Quaglia, R.J. and Cobb, C.D. (1996): Toward a theory of student aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 12, pp127-132.
- [13]. Rae, D. (2004): "Entrepreneurial learning: a practical model from the creative industries", *Education and Training*, 46(8/9), pp. 492-500.
- [14]. Salami C.G.E. (2011): Entrepreneurial Interventionism and Challenges of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*. 11 (7), (USA)
- [15]. Udoji, J. O. (1977): Management development" in Udo-aka, et al (eds), *Management Development in Nigeria: Challenges of Indigenization*, Ibadan, Oxford University Press.
- [16]. UNESCO (2012): Graduate Employability in Asia, Asia and Pacific's Regional Bureau for Education, UNESCO.
- [17]. Ussman, A. M. Y. Postigo, S. (2000): O papel da universidade no fomento da funcao empresarial. *Anais univestanas. Cienciassociais e humans No especial 1999 – 2000, Anais Anniversario*.

Odigbo, P. C. "Methods of Teaching Entrepreneurship and Prior Skills as Predictors of Employment Aspiration among graduates." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 11(1), (2021): pp. 34-37.